

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5**

DATE: September 8, 2000

SUBJECT: Reports of Significant Developments and Activities
Ending on September 1, 2000

FROM: William E. Muno, Director
Superfund Division

TO: Francis X. Lyons
Regional Administrator

David A. Ullrich
Deputy Regional Administrator

The activities listed below are organized by site-specific activities, other significant developments and training/conferences:

SITE-SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Response (Mercury Spill), Avon, Indiana

On August 14, 2000, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) requested United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) Emergency Response Branch assistance in assessing a reported mercury spill at a residence in Avon, Indiana. A small amount of mercury had been discovered in a barn by a group of 7 children. The children had played with and spilled the mercury while building an outdoor playhouse and then collected as much as possible to show their parents. U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Callie Bolattino responded with the Superfund Technical Assistance & Response Team contractors to determine whether or not the children's residences had been contaminated. Air monitoring and soil sampling indicated that mercury was not present in the residences, but that an area in the barn required decontamination.

Contact: Callie Bolattino (312-353-3490)

Subsurface Geophysical Survey Completed, S. F. Bowser Pump Company Site, Fort Wayne, Indiana

On August 24, 2000, Field Services Section (FSS) personnel completed a final geophysical evaluation of the former S. F. Bowser Pump Company site, a Brownfield site, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. On two previous occasions, the FSS conducted high sensitivity metal detector geophysical surveys at the site to locate buried tanks, which were found, and later removed. Today, single family homes are on these two surveyed areas. This final survey was conducted on the last 5.4 acres of the property, which was thought to be cleared of all buried objects. However, three areas were found to have buried metal, and will need to be investigated before additional homes are built. The 5.4 acres was surveyed in one-half day using a recent equipment upgrade version.

Contact: James Ursic (312-353-1526)

Public Meeting, Aircraft Components (D & L Sales) Superfund Site, Benton Harbor, Michigan

On August 8, 2000, a public meeting/public hearing was held in Benton Harbor, Michigan, about the Aircraft Components (D & L Sales) Superfund Site, a radiation site. The warehouse buildings at the site contained remnants of an inventory of World War II-era military aircraft parts that the now-defunct Aircraft Components, Inc., bought as surplus material for resale. Three people spoke for the record, all in favor of U.S. EPA's plan, including one of the owners of the property.

Contacts: Don deBlasio (312-886-4360)
Kevin Adler (312-886-7078)

Public Meeting, Sparta Landfill Superfund Site, Sparta, Michigan

On August 15, 2000, U.S. EPA held a public meeting for the Sparta Landfill Superfund site in Sparta, Michigan. The Sparta Landfill site is an inactive landfill located in Kent County, Michigan. The site is a closed municipal landfill covering approximately 26 acres. U.S. EPA explained the recommended cleanup plan for the Sparta Landfill site to the residents of Sparta Township. The residents' concern was the contamination and alternatives U.S. EPA recommended for the cleanup.

Contacts: Janet Pope (312-353-0628)

Cheryl Allen (312-353-6196)
Scott Hansen (312-886-1999)

Ongoing Media Activity, Nicor Mercury Cleanup, Chicago (Metro) Area, Illinois

The Office of Public Affairs press team members responded to a flood of inquiries from the media regarding the discovery of mercury contamination in Chicago-area homes from which gas meters with mercury regulators had been removed. We issued a news release on September 1, 2000, announcing planned weekend inspections of scrap yards. Channels 2, 5, 7, and 32, and the Chicago Tribune reported on the weekend activity. Regional Administrator Francis X. Lyons spoke on-camera for the Channel 5 news.

Contacts: Karen Thompson (312-353-8547)
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Rey Rivera (312-886-1450)
William Muno (312-353-9773)
Tom Krueger (312-886-0562)

Brownfields Pilot Media Event and Site Tour, Canton Industrial Corporation Site, Canton, Illinois

On August 7, 2000, Joe Dufficy and Mike Gifford, Brownfields Early Action Section, attended a site tour and media briefing at the Canton Industrial Corporation site (the former International Harvester site) in Canton, Illinois. The site comprises 33-acres directly adjacent to the central business district. In 1998, Canton received a \$200,000 Brownfield Demonstration Assessment Pilot grant to evaluate environmental conditions at the closed manufacturing plant. The purpose of the media event was to showcase the accomplishments at the site for Congressman Lane Evans. U.S. EPA's removal program is currently undertaking an extensive asbestos abatement of those portions of the site damaged by a 1997 fire. Total volume of asbestos containing materials is estimated at 30,000 to 40,000 tons. In addition, as part of the Brownfield Pilot project, Phase II environmental site assessment activities have begun with the installation of groundwater monitoring wells and an extensive soil sampling program. The media event opened with a site tour followed by a press conference. Approximately 30 people were in attendance, with press coverage from three Peoria TV stations, several newspapers, and radio stations.

Contact: Mike Gifford (312-886-7257)

**Removal Site Visit, Canton Industrial Corporation Site,
Canton, Illinois**

On August 31, 2000, approximately 200 seventh-grade children from Ingersol Junior High School in Canton, Illinois, visited the Canton Industrial Corporation site (the former International Harvester site). The site is the focus of Canton's Brownfield Assessment grant and is currently in the midst of an extensive removal action entailing the removal of more than 30,000 tons of asbestos containing materials. A 1997 fire destroyed many of the onsite structures and caused the release of asbestos. The students were able to view the loading of materials for off-site transport and disposal and ask questions regarding the site. The event was organized by the City of Canton and U.S. EPA's public relations office to educate students on the history of the site, investigation, cleanup activities, and redevelopment options being considered.

Contacts: Stavros Emmanouil (312-886-1768)
Mike Gifford (312-886-7257)

**Community Interviews, Sheboygan Harbor & River Superfund Site,
Sheboygan, Wisconsin**

On August 2-3, 2000, community interviews were conducted for the Sheboygan Harbor & River Superfund site in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Information obtained from these interviews will be used to revise the current community involvement plan. The community involvement coordinators traveled to Sheboygan to talk with people about their concerns and how they would like to be kept informed during the cleanup process. While people were relieved that a cleanup decision has been made, some were still concerned about economic loss in the harbor area, navigability, and the lengthy negotiation process that precedes actual cleanup.

Contacts: Susan Pastor (312-353-1325)
Tom Short (312-353-8826)

OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

Continuous-Seismic Profiling, Chicago and Fox Rivers, Illinois

On August 29-30, 2000, Eric White, Branch of Geophysical Applications and Support, U.S. Geological Survey, and Mark Vendl, Field Services Section, Superfund, Region 5, conducted continuous-seismic profiling (CSP) on the Chicago and Fox Rivers in Illinois. These surveys were conducted as part of the Environmental Quality Assessments of these two rivers being conducted by the Region 5 Water Division. The purpose of these surveys was to determine if this technique would be useful to map the thickness of contaminated sediments in these rivers. CSP uses acoustic pulses to sound the sub-bottom of lakes and rivers to determine the depth to various geologic layers. If it is determined that CSP is useful for these assessments, more detailed surveys will be scheduled for next year. Field support was provided by Gary Cygan, U.S. Geological Survey, and John Dorkin and George Azevado of the Water Division.

Contact: Mark Vendl (312-886-0405)

TRAINING/CONFERENCES

Federal Facilities Remediation Seminar, Chicago, Illinois

On August 22-24, 2000, the Region 5 Superfund Division, Federal Facilities Response Section, hosted a seminar on current issues revolving around Federal facility cleanup. The seminar was jointly developed by the Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) Training Center (CTC). Topics discussed included Site Closeout processes, Unexploded Ordnance, Institutional Controls, Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS), Federal to Federal Land Transfers, Long Term Groundwater Monitoring, and Five Year Reviews. Several instructors were Region 5 staff. The seminar was attended by people from Region 5 States, Department of Defense services, Department of Interior, and other regions.

Contacts: Ken Tindall (312-886-9895)
Diana Young (202-260-5033)

Presentation, Department of Transportation, Washington, D.C.

On August 29, 2000, Sheila Calovich and Ann Whelan (Oil

Planning and Response Section) made a presentation on the Region 5 government-initiated unannounced exercise program (Oil Pollution Act) during a public meeting at the Department of Transportation in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this public meeting was to address current concerns regarding the Preparedness for Response Exercise Program (PREP). Ann Whelan explained to the audience, who included government and industry representatives, how Region 5's exercise program worked and the changes Region 5 would like to see made to the current PREP guidelines. Those changes included increasing the number of exercises that the U.S. EPA can conduct in a year and that exercises must be successfully completed for the facility to qualify for the 3-year exemption. It is anticipated that these changes in the PREP guidelines will be published in the Federal Register next year. Larry Reed, Acting Director, Office of Emergency and Remedial Response made opening remarks at the meeting.

Contacts: Sheila Calovich (312-353-1505)
Ann Whelan (312-886-7258)

Meeting, Brownfields Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund, Village of Hodgkins, Illinois

On August 8, 2000, Brooke Furio, Brownfields Early Action Section, attended a meeting with the Village of Hodgkins, Illinois, to discuss the Village's interest in taking advantage of funding that is available for cleanups at brownfields properties. This funding is being made available through West Central Municipal Conference's (WCMC) U.S. EPA Brownfields Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF). The Village has four redevelopment projects that need financial assistance. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, the projects as presented are not eligible for funding under the WCMC's Brownfields Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund.

Contact: Brooke Furio (312-353-2513)

Program Attendance, Milwaukee Brownfields Pilot, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

On August 10, 2000, Brownfields and Early Action Section staff attended a program sponsored by Menomonee Valley Partners, to hear from the consultant for the Emeryville, California, Brownfields Site Assessment Pilot about addressing groundwater

contamination in a multi-site industrial area. The program highlighted the strategy and progress in Emeryville since the pilot grant was awarded in 1996 and compared it to the situation in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley. Activities under the Milwaukee pilot turn out to strongly parallel what has happened in Emeryville. The partnering with Emeryville began when the two pilot City contacts became acquainted at the Brownfields 1999 conference in Dallas last November. Although Milwaukee is a much larger municipality than Emeryville, where the pilot area takes up most of the jurisdictional boundaries of the San Francisco Bay suburb, there are significant similarities in terms of groundwater regulations they operate under in California and Wisconsin, leading to the need for similar cleanup solutions. This type of partnering and demonstration is a key example of the transfer of lessons learned that the brownfields pilot program is intended to foster. The program drew nearly 75 participants, including State and local officials, private attorneys, and owners of businesses in the Valley.

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